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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
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Summary record of the 1636th meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 25 October 2018, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Leinarte

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Sixth periodic report of the Bahamas (*continued*) (CEDAW/C/BHS/6; CEDAW/C/BHS/Q/6 and CEDAW/C/BHS/Q/6/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Bahamas took places at the Committee table.*

Articles 10 to 14 (*continued*)

2. **Ms. Acosta Vargas** said that, although women in the Bahamas were generally highly educated and faced no formal constraints on their right to participate in the labour market, their employment opportunities were limited by the fact that tourism and construction were the only sectors that were expanding. In view of that situation, she asked what percentage of the persons employed in those sectors were women.

3. Noting that a disproportionate number of domestic workers were women, she asked what percentage of women were employed in housekeeping in the tourism industry and whether any oversight mechanisms had been established in the places where they worked. It would be interesting to learn whether undocumented migrant workers had access to a complaints mechanism or to the justice system, whether the State party intended to ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), what percentage of unemployed persons were women and what measures were taken to support women living in areas with particularly high levels of unemployment.

4. In view of the fact that women employed in the private sector experienced de facto discrimination, particularly in male-dominated areas such as journalism and engineering, she asked what was being done to protect women against such discrimination. She wondered what percentage of women held management positions in the private sector, whether any complaints of sexual harassment in the workplace had been brought before the courts and, if so, whether the perpetrators had been prosecuted.

5. Noting that the Bahamas had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, she asked whether any measures were in place to promote employment among persons with disabilities and to tackle discrimination in the workplace against persons with disabilities, migrants, lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender and intersex persons and persons who did not speak English. Lastly, she asked whether measures had been taken to eradicate child labour and whether the minimum age for employment had been raised to 16 years.

6. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** said that she wished to know how the State party would resolve the contradiction inherent in the fact that the age of consent was 16 years but the minimum age at which contraception could lawfully be obtained was 18 years. Noting that the main responsibility for ensuring that contraception was used in sexual relations tended to fall on women, she asked whether a married woman would be required to obtain her husband's permission if she wished to undergo a tubal ligation and whether efforts were made to promote the use of women's condoms.

7. In view of the fact that rates of HIV infection were relatively high, she asked what measures were being taken to improve the protection of vulnerable persons, including children and young adults, against infection by HIV and whether such protection was addressed in sex education courses.

8. The Committee would be interested to learn how many women per year underwent a legal abortion and to what extent women undergoing legal abortions and their families and doctors were stigmatized. She wondered whether the State party would consider amending the law to ensure that victims of rape or incest could obtain legal abortions and whether efforts had been made to assess the prevalence of unlawful, unsafe abortions and the connection between such abortions and the country's relatively high maternal mortality rate.

9. **Mr. Campbell** (Bahamas) said that the Education Act provided for mandatory education for all children aged between 5 and 16 years. Following a perusal of studies highlighting the benefits of preschool education, the Government had recently decided to make such education universally available for children aged between 3 and 5 years. To that end, 1,000 preschool places would be created per year within the State school system and arrangements would be made with the private sector for the provision of additional State-funded places. An agreement had been established with a telecommunications company to ensure that all State preschools and primary schools would have Internet connections and all pupils in those schools would receive electronic tablets. Students living on the outlying Family Islands that lacked sufficient teaching staff would be able to use their tablets to take part in remote learning.

10. **Ms. Sinclair** (Bahamas) said that a plan was in place to promote open and distance education. Under that plan, schools in every district on the Family Islands would have access to an interactive whiteboard and children in those schools would be able to engage in remote learning through online programmes, including in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. In addition, resource centres would be established on all the islands to provide opportunities for remote learning for all residents, including adult learners.

11. Having made great efforts to promote attendance and access to education, the Government had now decided to address the quality of the education received by children by placing particular emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy at the primary level.

12. In order to promote women's tertiary and post-secondary education, the budget allocated to the Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute had been increased. A day-care centre had been established at that Institute so that children under the age of 5 could receive free care while their parents attended classes. Funding allocated for scholarships at the University of the Bahamas had been increased to ensure that more students would have access to tertiary education. An adult literacy programme had been established to enable working adults to enhance their literacy skills at times agreed with their employers. In order to promote school attendance, steps had been taken to ensure that any pupil who had been absent for three weeks or more would be contacted by a school attendance officer. The Government had established safety net programmes to provide school lunches to pupils from low-income families. In partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Government had made plans to pilot a sustainable school feeding programme in a rural school on New Providence.

13. Under the education sector plan, efforts would be made to determine whether educational materials and the school curriculum contained or promoted gender stereotypes. The Education Act, and the Government's education policies, had been reviewed from a gender perspective in conjunction with the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization. The National Advisory Council for Education, whose members included representatives of the private sector and civil society, was mandated to make recommendations relating to the education system to the Ministry of Education. Consideration was being given to the possibility of establishing a national accreditation board that would monitor educational standards throughout the education system.

14. **Mr. Campbell** (Bahamas) said that a programme had been established to ensure that pregnant teenagers could continue their education both while they were pregnant and after they had given birth.

15. **Ms. Sinclair** (Bahamas) said that the Ministry of Education had established the Mabel Walker Professional Development Institute with a view to building the capacities of teachers, teaching assistants and school leaders. In order to ensure that corporal punishment would be used only as a last resort, teachers and school administrators were given training in positive behaviour management.

16. **Mr. Campbell** (Bahamas) said that the Government had taken steps to provide over 2,000 schoolchildren with school uniforms and footwear to ensure that they were ready to start the school year. Through the National Council for the Disabled, special schools had been established for blind persons, deaf persons and persons with other types of disability

and transportation was provided to enable pupils to travel to and from those schools. Discussions had taken place with the University of the Bahamas to ensure that pupils with disabilities could successfully undertake the transition from school to university education. Adults who wished to enhance their employment prospects could do so through the National Training Agency.

17. **Ms. Armbrister** (Bahamas) said that a patients' bill of rights was currently being drafted that would grant women the right to have abortions and address the discrepancy between the age of consent and the minimum age for obtaining contraception. Owing to measures taken to educate the public in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention, the number of persons newly diagnosed with HIV/AIDS every year had fallen by over 40 per cent between 2006 and 2015. Women's condoms were available. Under the Focus on Youth Programme, sex education was provided to children at both the primary and secondary levels. The sex education curriculum covered the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and enabled children to make good choices in respect of their sexual well-being and health. The maternal mortality rate for the whole population currently stood at three deaths per year.

18. **Mr. Campbell** (Bahamas) said that abortion was permitted in cases where the pregnancy was the result of rape or posed a threat to the life of the pregnant woman. The Government had made efforts to ensure that employees would receive equal pay for work of equal value. The strategic plan on employment, when implemented, would ensure that any pay disparities in the private sector were addressed. Conscious of the fact that it should lead the way in enhancing the employment prospects of persons with disabilities, the Government had taken measures to ensure that such persons were provided with the training that they needed to enter the workplace and become self-reliant. The Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development was among the government ministries that employed persons with disabilities.

19. **Ms. Major** (Bahamas) said that, in 2015, around 20,000 women and 13,000 men had been employed in the restaurant and hotel sector while around 1,000 women and 17,000 men had been employed in the construction industry. As the numbers of both employed and unemployed people had risen between November 2017 and May 2018, there had been no significant change in the unemployment rate over that period. Under the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities) Act, companies or organizations that employed 100 or more persons were required to employ at least one person with a disability. In the previous five years, there had been no prosecutions for sexual harassment in the workplace.

20. **Mr. Campbell** (Bahamas), replying to questions posed on the employment of children, said that 14-year-olds sometimes worked in grocery stores on a part-time basis. However, such part-time work should not interfere with the studies of children of compulsory school age, namely children who were under 16 years of age.

21. **Ms. Major** (Bahamas), replying to questions posed on access to employment for members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community, said that members of that community were protected from discrimination by the Employment Act.

22. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** said that, while the State party was to be commended for the range of programmes that it had adopted in the areas of health and education, the lack of statistical data on their impact and the number of beneficiaries was a major shortcoming, as it prevented both the State party and the Committee from quantifying their success.

23. The continued legally accepted practice of corporal punishment in schools, even if it was used only as a last resort, was a major cause for concern. Furthermore, the criteria used to determine when the threshold for its use had been reached were not clearly defined. She asked how the use of corporal punishment in schools was monitored and whether the State party had considered joining the increasing number of countries that had outlawed and abolished the practice.

24. The dearth of statistical data on the number of lawful and unlawful abortions performed and, where applicable, the penalties imposed was also regrettable. It was particularly important for the Committee to have such data at its disposal given the high

teenage pregnancy rate in the State party and the fact that the majority of those pregnancies were unwanted, which often led families to resort to unlawful abortion.

25. She would appreciate additional information on the key population groups that were vulnerable to HIV and on the risk of infection faced by women. She recalled that, in conservative societies where homosexuality was not openly disclosed, women married to men who had sex with men often ran the risk of HIV infection. It would be helpful to hear more about the situation of transgender persons and female prostitutes in the Bahamas, including the support services available to them.

26. **Mr. Campbell** (Bahamas) said that the Government understood the pressing need to collect statistical data, not least because such data would help it direct its resources in the future. The possibility of hiring a statistician to oversee the collection and validation of statistical data was currently being discussed.

27. Whereas the use of corporal punishment had been widespread in school, family and social settings in the past, Bahamian society had progressed to the point where it could now be administered only by school principals as a last resort. If corporal punishment was to be administered by a male principal, a female member of staff had to be present. Discussions on the appropriateness of the use of corporal punishment were still ongoing.

28. **Ms. Sinclair** (Bahamas) said that a reporting and accountability framework was in place for the administration of corporal punishment. Cases involving the use of corporal punishment had to be reported in writing to the Director of Education within a period of 24 hours. The decision to administer such punishment was not taken lightly. It was used as a measure of last resort following a series of actions grievous enough to have threatened the safety of other students or teachers or both. Teachers and school administrators received regular training in alternative classroom management strategies and parents were called in to work together with them and counsellors so that such strategies could be applied and corporal punishment avoided.

29. **Mr. Campbell** (Bahamas) said that, while it should be possible to provide the Committee with statistical data on the number of lawful abortions performed in the Bahamas, it would not be possible to provide data on the number of unlawful abortions performed, as the women who underwent such a procedure would likely not be forthcoming. The HIV/AIDS Secretariat was open to all and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community were actively involved in its advocacy activities. Sex workers had access to counselling and sexual health services, including contraception. The HIV/AIDS Secretariat had also begun conducting its public information campaigns in Creole, which was spoken by the largest group of migrants in the Bahamas.

30. **Ms. Armbrister** (Bahamas) said that the teenage pregnancy rate had decreased significantly in recent years.

31. **Ms. Jahan** said that she was pleased to note that the State party had adopted a number of measures to promote the economic and social empowerment of women and that, generally speaking, women in the Bahamas did not suffer economic discrimination. However, it would be useful to know whether the State party routinely conducted an impact assessment of development plans targeting women, particularly older women and women with disabilities, and of structural adjustment policies. She asked whether any studies had been conducted on the impact of trade liberalization on women and whether government officials received training on gender budgeting as a matter of course. It would also be helpful to hear more about the State party's approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in a gender-responsive manner.

32. She would also appreciate more information on the various programmes providing assistance to women conducted by the Department of Social Services and on the number and profile of the beneficiaries. The delegation might also describe the efforts being made to increase income-generating opportunities for women on the Family Islands by providing them with skills development and entrepreneurship training. While there were no legislative barriers preventing women from accessing loans or other forms of credit, it was her understanding that the terms of repayment often precluded women working in the informal sector and others from doing so. She asked whether there were specific loan schemes or

financial credit programmes for women and whether a share of the funding allocated to support micro and small and medium-sized enterprises at the national level had been earmarked for women entrepreneurs.

33. The Committee had learned from alternative sources that forced evictions were becoming increasingly widespread in the State party and that women, especially female heads of household, were disproportionately affected. Moreover, she had been given to understand that the process of seeking judicial remedies was lengthy, cumbersome and expensive. She would welcome information on the legislation regulating social or affordable housing for women. Noting that the majority of social security schemes were contributory in nature, she asked what social safety nets were in place for women, particularly older women and women with disabilities, who had never worked in the formal sector.

34. Given that the Bahamas was considered to be an international tax haven, she would be interested to know what safeguards or regulatory measures the State party had put in place to ensure that its legislation did not affect the ability of other countries to mobilize tax revenue for the realization of women's rights and substantive gender equality.

35. The plight of women and girls living in remote rural communities on the Family Islands and in shanty towns close to urban areas, many of whom were exposed to poverty and gender-based violence and had limited access to food, water, sanitation and electricity, was a serious cause for concern. She asked whether the Department of Gender and Family affairs had completed its planned survey to assess the needs of Family Island women and, if so, what the outcome had been and whether it had informed the content of new policy measures to improve their situation. She also wished to know whether the "Over-the-Hill" community development partnership initiative, the aim of which was to restore and rejuvenate a deprived area of downtown Nassau through the use of smart and green technology and social and economic empowerment, was gender-sensitive and inclusive of older women and women with disabilities.

36. The delegation might also describe any targeted measures taken to address the feminization of poverty in rural areas and to increase the visibility of women in the rural economy. Noting that efforts were being made to provide women with the skills necessary for handicraft production, she asked how such products were marketed to ensure that they generated sufficient revenue. She also wondered whether any targeted measures had been taken to guarantee women's access to the marketing facilities and agricultural extension services provided by the Department of Agriculture. It would also be useful to receive more information about women's agricultural landownership rights.

37. Noting that the rate of women's representation in local government councils on the Family Islands stood at 57 per cent, she asked to what extent rural women had been involved in designing and implementing local development plans, including in the agricultural sector. She would also like to know whether temporary special measures had been adopted with a view to increasing the number of rural girls in higher education. There was evidence to suggest that many women living on the Family Islands still struggled to access health-care services, including mental health services. She asked whether the State party had considered adopting demand assigned multiple access technology to improve communication between the health-care centres in urban areas and those on the Family Islands.

38. The Committee had received reports that access to justice was almost non-existent on the Family Islands, that police posts were understaffed and that perpetrators of violence and sexual harassment often acted with impunity. She asked whether the police officers and magistrates serving on the Family Islands had been trained on gender issues. Despite the Bahamas being highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change and to natural and environmental disasters, the report was silent on the gender dimension of climate change and disaster risk reduction. She understood that the State party had already undertaken a gender impact assessment in that connection with the assistance of UN-Women. She asked what the outcome of the assessment had been, and whether it had informed the content of new policy measures, and how the State party ensured that women were involved in the preparation, adoption and implementation of related national policies, in keeping with the

Committee's general recommendation No. 37 on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change.

39. **Mr. Campbell** (Bahamas) said that the country's shortcomings in the area of statistical data collection made it difficult to measure the impact of the programmes being rolled out in various sectors. Female heads of household, specifically single mothers, and older persons were the main beneficiaries of the programmes conducted by the Department of Social Services. The Department provided emergency assistance to cover the cost of food, death and burial, rent, temporary accommodation in the case of a forced eviction, utilities, school uniforms and preschool. It also conducted a small-scale home repairs programme. Repair services were only available to homeowners actually living in the property and not to renters so as to encourage absentee homeowners to invest in their property. The National Insurance Board provided persons aged 65 years and over who had not contributed to a pension scheme with a monthly allowance. A similar social safety net was in place for persons with disabilities. Upon instruction from school guidance counsellors, social workers could conduct visits to the homes of children who were experiencing difficulties or who showed signs of neglect. Social workers were present on every island but one. A social worker from a neighbouring island provided the necessary services. It was hoped that a permanent social worker for that island could be recruited in the near future.

40. The majority of the so-called shanty towns were located in New Providence and were the result of persons having built, without a permit, houses that did not meet applicable industry standards. Those houses did, however, have electricity, running water, telephones, cable television and Internet and, in some cases, even made use of alternative energy. Moreover, those communities had their own amenities, such as shops, restaurants and entertainment facilities. However, the lack of organization in such places was a major cause for concern, as the closely built, improvised housing of such communities prevented emergency vehicles from gaining ready access to them.

41. The agricultural products of Family Island women were transported to a packing house where they were purchased by government representatives and taken to market. Cooperatives were actively involved in helping women sell their handicraft products at market. Regrettably, no quota for women was in place in that sector.

42. Although there were no mental health professionals stationed on the Family Islands, primary health-care professionals could refer patients for mental health treatment if necessary. It was not unusual for patients in need of specific care to be transferred to a larger island or for the health-care professionals qualified to provide it to travel to the patient.

43. The widely held belief that the Bahamas was a tax haven was in fact erroneous. The Government of the Bahamas prided itself on its strict compliance with international standards relating to tax cooperation and tax transparency. The financial services sector was a major driver of the Bahamian economy, providing direct and indirect employment to around 20,000 Bahamians and accounting for more than 15 per cent of the country's gross domestic product.

44. **Ms. Gibson** (Bahamas) said that, as a member of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes, the Government was fully committed to ensuring that the Bahamas was in compliance with international standards on transparency and information exchange for tax purposes, including those established by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Among other measures, it had implemented the United States Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act, signed a number of tax information exchange agreements with other countries and enacted the International Tax Cooperation Act, in 2010, which laid the foundations for cooperation between the Bahamas and other States on tax-related matters. A working group had also been set up to implement the Standard for Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Information in Tax Matters of OECD.

45. **Mr. Campbell** (Bahamas), providing an overview of the land ownership regime in the Bahamas, said that the Government was currently conducting a land audit with a view to establishing a comprehensive land register and providing owners with much-needed title

deeds, thus facilitating their access to credit. He rejected the suggestion that access to justice in the Family Island was non-existent. Each island had an Administrator, its own police force and contact with magistrates. Moreover, processes were in place to enable persons to seek redress in the event that a complaint to the police had not been handled to their satisfaction. A general reluctance to report incidents to the police in the first place was, however, a major challenge. Awareness-raising activities were therefore being undertaken in that connection.

46. Preparation for climate-change-related natural disasters such as hurricanes was carried out locally and with the involvement of Family Island administrators and councillors, many of whom were women. Secure shelters staffed by members of the Royal Bahamas Defence Force were available in such scenarios. Social Services provided aftercare to affected persons in the event that their homes were damaged or destroyed.

47. **Ms. Jahan** said that the remoteness of the Family Islands, coupled with the existence of socioeconomic challenges, could hinder women's access to justice and make it difficult for them to obtain redress for miscarriages of justice. She wished to know how the State party made sure that access to justice was user-friendly, including by giving consideration to the needs of women who were unfamiliar with legal processes or had low levels of literacy. She drew the delegation's attention to the Committee's general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, which she would encourage the State party to consult.

48. **Mr. Campbell** (Bahamas) said that, in reality, all persons living on the Family Islands had ancestral links to the other islands or to the capital, New Providence; thus, no one was ever so isolated that they could not contact someone in the community or in authority — whether it was a police officer, social worker or pastor — who could help them to seek redress. The Government was therefore satisfied that there were no problems in that regard.

Articles 15 and 16

49. **Ms. Narain** said she was concerned that family matters were being dealt with by magistrates' courts, which, according to reports, were under-resourced and ill-equipped to handle such cases. She wished to know what proportion of judicial officers dealing with family matters in the magistrates' courts were women, what steps were being taken to ensure that mediation, if used, took account of women's rights and interests and whether an update on the State party's long-standing plans to establish a specialized system of family courts could be provided. She wondered how family issues were handled on the Family Islands, which relied on visiting magistrates and, in particular, what arrangements were in place when urgent interim or provisional orders were required. She emphasized that continuous professional training on the Convention and on other pertinent regional and international human rights instruments, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, should be provided to the judiciary.

50. Although the State party had raised the legal age for marriage to 18 years, certain exceptions were still in place that allowed children as young as 15 years old to marry with parental consent. She asked how many early marriages were entered into each year, and under what circumstances they had been permitted, and whether the State party would consider removing the exceptions to ensure that no one could be married before the age of 18. Regarding children born out of wedlock, reports suggested that the process for establishing paternity was difficult and often humiliating. She would like to know whether paternity had to be established in court, whether legal aid was available in such cases and whether DNA tests were accessible and affordable. According to section 34 of the State party's Child Protection Act of 2007, all widows and unmarried women had a duty to maintain their children. She was concerned that such a provision might be a disincentive for fathers to make voluntary maintenance payments or for the courts to grant maintenance orders. In that connection, she would be interested to know what measures the Government intended to take to address the complexity of maintenance proceedings against fathers who defaulted on payments and what women's property rights were in cases of divorce. Lastly, she asked what progress had been made to enact legal provisions governing de facto unions in order to ensure that women were protected in cases of separation and what impact the

State party's strict nationality provisions had on women's inheritance and property rights and on a woman's right to freely choose her spouse, including non-Bahamians.

51. **Mr. Campbell** (Bahamas) said that efforts were under way to ensure that family matters were dealt with in separate courts located away from those that heard criminal cases. It was, however, an ongoing challenge; the court system in general was experiencing a significant backlog in cases. The Government was therefore working to increase the number of courts and staff and to upgrade the equipment used.

52. It was true that the process to enforce maintenance orders was a tedious one. The Government was currently discussing the introduction of court-ordered child support withholdings from the father's earnings. In the event that the paternity of the child was in question, the courts would order the necessary DNA tests, which were widely available, before making their determination.

53. **Ms. Gibson** (Bahamas) said that the law did not yet recognize de facto unions. There were a number of options to enable women in the Family Islands to obtain interim orders. For example, Family Island administrators had the power to act as magistrates in such cases and videoconferencing and telephone services were also available to facilitate contact with magistrates and Supreme Court justices in the capital.

54. **Ms. Major** (Bahamas) said that, under the Child Protection Act and the Magistrates Act, every woman had the right to apply for maintenance from the father of her children. There were issues surrounding the enforcement of maintenance orders, however, and the judiciary was discussing ways of improving the system.

55. The Government was currently considering setting the marriageable age at 18 years, without exception. As things stood, however, the age at which someone could be married was actually 14 years old, although the consent of the parents and the courts was required. Such marriages were rare; indeed, there had been none in the previous 30 years. There were no statistics to show whether pregnancy was the motivation for early marriages. Lastly, under the Matrimony Causes Act, which established the procedures and rights in cases of dissolution, annulment or separation, women were entitled to 50 per cent of any property obtained during the marriage.

56. **Mr. Campbell** (Bahamas) said the suggestion that the provisions of the Bahamas Nationality Act discouraged Bahamian women from marrying non-Bahamian men was not borne out by the statistics.

57. **Ms. Hofmeister** said that, according to alternative reports, orphaned children born in the Bahamas to non-Bahamian parents were invisible to the authorities. They did not automatically receive Bahamian citizenship and struggled to obtain legal guardianship, which essentially rendered them stateless — unable to acquire either Bahamian or Haitian nationality due to administrative barriers and intersectional discrimination — until they reached 18 years of age. She wished to know what the State party was doing to address the issue.

58. **Mr. Campbell** (Bahamas) said that the Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development could only intervene if it had been informed of such cases. Once such notification had been received, the orphaned child would be made a ward of the State, if necessary, and provision for his or her care and education would be arranged. The requisite citizenship documentation would also be provided once the child was 18 years of age. It was often the case, however, that members of the close-knit Haitian community did not alert the authorities to an orphaned child's situation, preferring to look after him or her themselves, which unfortunately caused issues once the child reached the age of majority and needed the necessary paperwork to establish his or her nationality.

59. The preparations for his country's periodic review had involved a diverse set of stakeholders from government departments and civil society. The promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls was a national priority, including in the context of development planning. The process of self-reflection had highlighted a number of challenges and the Government would be grateful to receive technical assistance to help overcome them. Support in training the judiciary on the provisions of the Convention,

implementing gender policy and helping in the collection and analysis of disaggregated data were just some of the areas in which such assistance would be most welcome.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.